According to the San Francisco Chronicle, there are over 25,000 undocumented students who graduate every year from high school. These students face a difficult challenge paying for college because they are not eligible for federal grants or loans. They are also unable to work legally in the state to help pay for school, even though they live here and have attended and graduated from California schools.

This year, Assemblymember Gill Cedillo introduced the California Dream Act to help these students by giving qualifying undocumented college students access to institutional financial aid and Cal Grants from the University of California, California State University and Community Colleges. The California Dream Act, which was first introduced in 2006, was introduced this year in two parts.

The first bill AB 130 allows students that meet the in-state tuition requirements to apply for and receive specified financial aid programs administered by California’s public colleges and universities.

The types of aid these students would be eligible for include:
- Board of Governors (BOG) Fee Waiver, and
- Institutional Student Aid: Student aid program administered by the attending college or university (i.e. State University Grant, UC Grant)

AB 131 would allow students that meet the in-state tuition requirements to apply for and receive Cal Grants by California’s public colleges and universities. These students would not be eligible to apply or receive any Competitive Cal Grant unless funding remains available after all California resident students have received Competitive awards that they are eligible for.

The bills would not become operative until July 1, 2012.

Eligible students are those who may qualify for in-state tuition at public colleges and universities in California (California Education Code §68130.5) and meet ALL of the following requirements:
- Secondary school attendance in California for three or more years; at least one year of which shall have been at a California high school.
- Graduation from a California secondary school or attainment of the equivalent thereof
- If undocumented, the filing of an affidavit with the college or university stating that they have applied for a lawful immigration status or will apply as soon as they are eligible to do so.

Source: Information obtained from the California Dream Act website at www.californiadreamact.org.
Migrant Education Program

The Migrant Education Program (MEP) is a federally funded program, authorized under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The program is intended to support high quality and comprehensive educational programs for migrant children to help decrease the educational disruption and other problems that result from repeated moves, both between school districts and between states, as parents follow work within the agriculture industry.

MEP is available in all 50 states and is supported by both federal and state laws. The California MEP is the largest in the nation, as one out of every three migrant students in the United States resides in California, according to the California Department of Education (CDE). The CDE estimates that, “there are over 200,000 migrant students attending California schools during the regular school year and 97,000 attending summer/intersession classes.”

According to NCLB, the purpose of Migrant Education is to:

- Support high-quality and comprehensive educational programs for migratory children to help reduce the educational disruption and other problems that result from repeated moves;
- Ensure that migratory children who move among the states are not penalized in any manner by disparities among the states in curriculum, graduation requirements, and state academic content and student academic achievement standards;
- Ensure that migratory children are provided with appropriate educational services (including supportive services) that address their special needs in a coordinated and efficient manner;
- Ensure that migratory children receive full and appropriate opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic content and achievement standards that all children are expected to meet;
- Design programs to help migratory children overcome educational disruption, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, various health-related problems, and other factors that inhibit the ability of such children to make a successful transition to postsecondary education or employment; and
- Ensure that migratory children benefit from state and local systemic reforms.

Source: California Department of Education; http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/me/mt/overview.asp

Eligibility requirements:

According to the CDE, a child is considered “migrant” if a parent or guardian is a migratory worker in the agricultural, dairy, lumber, or fishing industries and whose family has moved during the past three years. This includes a move within the state but between school districts; or from out of state into California. Eligibility is determined by a Migrant Education recruiter through an interview conducted within the home of the child.

For more information the California Migrant Education Program and a list of Frequently Asked Questions, visit the CDE website at www.cde.ca.gov/sp/me/mt/.

You can also get information by calling the CDE Migrant, Indian, and International Education Office at 916-319-0851.

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Classes in your area can help you learn English

Learning English can be helpful while you are living and working in the United States. Many communities throughout the state offer English classes to help area residents learn the language. Men and women of different ages, ethnicities and education levels can study together in a classroom environment or work one-on-one with a tutor.

English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are available at a number of locations throughout California. Community colleges, Adult Schools or Education Centers, as well as Vocational Instructional Centers and community-based groups offer ESL classes to the general public. There are a variety of classes designed to meet any and every skill level. Whether you have had little exposure to English or you have a good background in the language but would like to improve your skills. Most often a test is administered to determine the best class for you.

If you are interested in taking a class at a community college in your area, you will need to enroll at the beginning of the semester or quarter—or prior to the class starting based on the college’s schedule.

These courses require a tuition fee, as well as course materials, which are an additional cost. There is often financial assistance available for these courses as well.

You would need to contact the Financial Aid office at the community college in your area to learn more about these options. To find the community college near you, visit www.californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/maps/districts.asp for a listing of colleges by region with their appropriate contact information. You can also find financial aid information at www.ICanAffordCollege.com

California Adult Schools and learning centers, as well as community-based programs are generally low or no cost and can be taken at any time. Most adult schools offer testing to determine what ESL class best suits your needs. To locate an Adult School in your area, visit www.californiaadultschools.org.

Head Start Programs

Head Start and Early Head Start are federally funded child development programs for very low-income individuals. Statewide, the programs serve an estimated 1,000,000 children and families, providing education and other services to those living below the federal poverty line. The primary target population for Project Head Start is children 0-5 years of age and pregnant women. It is based on the premise that all children have certain needs, and low-income children in particular can benefit from a comprehensive program aimed at meeting those needs.

The Head Start Program offers a number of services to qualifying children and families. These include education and special education services, health services, and social services. A large part of the success of Head Start is dependent upon parental involvement.

According to the California Head Start Association, 20.8 percent of Head Start employees are or were Head Start or Early Head Start parents. During this past program year, over 124,734 volunteers provided service to local Head Start programs and 82.7 percent of the volunteers are current or former parents of the local Head Start program.

Children from families receiving public assistance (TANF or SSI) and children in foster care are eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start services regardless of income. Approximately 10 percent of enrollments are provided to children with disabilities. When there is space available, children from families with slightly higher income may be able to participate in Head Start as well.

For information on a Head Start Program in your area visit, http://caheadstart.org/Roster.pdf.

You can also contact the California Head Start Association at (916) 444-7760.
On June 29, the U.S. Department of Labor announced that it was giving away more than $84 million to 68 organizations nationwide through the National Farmworker Jobs program. The program works to help eligible workers improve job skills and train for careers in emerging industries that offer higher wages and stable employment.

The grants will work to help the chronic unemployment and underemployment of migrant and seasonal workers that primarily work in agricultural jobs. The majority of the money will go to organizations in order to provide training, employment and support services to farmworkers and their families. The remaining resources will go to organizations to provide temporary or permanent housing assistance.

“Agricultural workers face significant barriers to stable employment, and all too often it is their families who pay the price,” said U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis in a press release announcing the grant funding. “These grants address this reality by not only helping workers improve and expand their job skills, but also by providing housing and other crucial support services.”

Grants for career and occupational training were awarded to five California organizations including the County of Kern and the Central Valley Opportunity Center. Proteus Inc., a La Cooperativa member, also received grant funds. Proteus, Inc. is an organization created to provide exceptional education, employment, training, and other services to the diverse population of Tulare, Kings, Fresno, and Kern counties. Proteus Inc. also focuses on green technology and providing solar training.

Housing assistance grants were given to three California organizations to help agricultural workers in California’s central coast region, the San Joaquin Valley along with unincorporated areas of Monterey County. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, these grants will provide permanent housing assistance, which includes pre-development and development services; project management; and resource development to secure acquisition, construction or renovation, and other operating funds for farmworker housing temporary and/or emergency housing assistance which includes pre-development and development services; project management; and resource development to secure acquisition, construction or renovation, and other operating funds for farmworker housing.

The grants will be given over the next two years on an annual basis starting July 1, 2011.

The contact information for the organizations receiving grant money is below if you wish to contact them for career training or housing assistance.

**Career Training**

- **County of Kern, Employers Training Resource**
  2001 28th Street
  Bakersfield, California 93301
  www.etronline.com
  661-336-6843

- **Center for Employment Training**
  701 Vine Street
  San Jose, California 95110
  www.cetweb.org
  408-534-5230

- **Central Valley Opportunity Center, Inc.**
  6838 W. Bridget Court
  Winton, California 95388
  www.cvoc.org
  209-357-0062

- **California Human Development Corporation**
  2945 Ramco Street Suite 195
  West Sacramento, California 95691
  www.chdcorp.org
  916-371-8220

- **Proteus, Inc.**
  1830 North Dinuba Boulevard
  Visalia, California 93279
  www.proteusinc.org
  559-733-5423

**Housing Assistance**

- **Peoples’ Self-Help Housing Corporation**
  3533 Empleo Street
  San Luis Obispo, California 93401
  www.pshhc.org
  805-781-3088

- **Self-Help Enterprises**
  8445 West Elowin Court
  Visalia, California 93290
  www.selfhelperprises.org
  559-802-1620

- **Rural Community Assistance Corporation**
  3120 Freeboard Drive Suite 201
  West Sacramento, California 95691
  www.rcac.org
  916-447-9832

For questions on housing assistance or job training, you can also contact La Cooperativa Campesina de California at www.lacooperativa.org or 916-388-2220.